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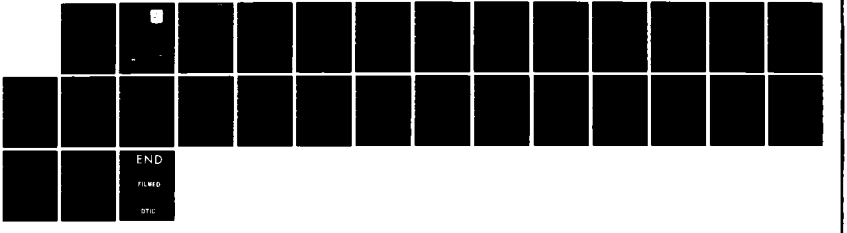

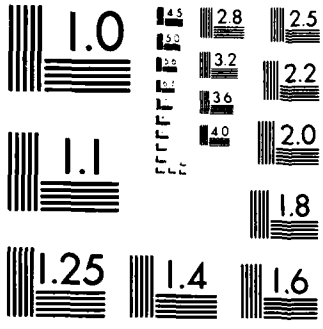

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FORCE MODULE CONCEPT

BY

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7 MAY 1984

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

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In January 1982, the Joint Chiefs of Staff envisioned that the use of force modules (combat units plus their support and sustainment) would significantly expedite both deliberate and crisis action planning and ehhance flexibility in the execution of operation plans. An evaluation of the force module concept was conducted in three phases during 1982-1983. The test was considered an overall success and the Force Module Implementation Plan was approved by JCS.

This paper briefly explores the force module concept from the Army point of view; provides an historical perspective on the subject; identifies minor

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problems associated with the Army in relation to this concept; and provides recommendations which could improve the concept and increase the flexibility of joint operation planning in both deliberate and crisis action situations.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

FORCE MODULE CONCEPT

GROUP STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper briefly explores the force module concept from the Army point of view; provides an historical perspective on the subject; identifies minor problems associated with the Army in relation to this concept; and provides recommendations which could improve the concept and increase the flexibility of joint operation planning in both deliberate and crisis action situations.

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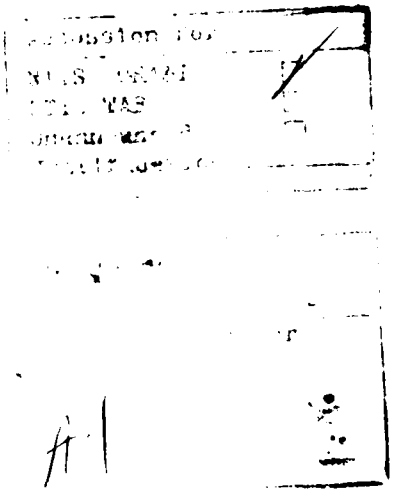

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Gordon M. Rounds and Lieutenant Colonel(P) Robert E. Gray worked for three years (1978-1980) as members of the United States Readiness Command (REDCOM) and XVIII Airborne Corps Staffs respectively. Together they designed, developed, and maintained force package options to support contingency planning requirements of REDCOM and then the initial planning efforts of the newly activated Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). These force package options were the precursors to the present force module concept.

Colonel Rounds was assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College in 1973 as a student and then remained on the staff as a JOPS plans and programs officer. In this capacity he developed, converted, and tested JOPS ADP software to run on a minicomputer supporting the schools' curriculum. His next assignment in 1977 was to J-5 Plans at the United States Readiness Command where he represented the supporting CINC for OPLAN 4102 and both developed and maintained JTF, Army, and Air Force force packages. In 1980 Colonel Rounds was assigned to J-5 Plans at the United States European Command where he was responsible for the preparation and maintenance of OPLAN 4102. These three consecutive joint assignments in the joint operations planning, deployment, and execution community have provided him with an excellent basis for evaluating the Force Module Concept.

LTC(P) Gray has served in command and staff positions in the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and in XVIII Airborne Corps units. In 1978 LTC(P) Gray was assigned as Chief of United States Readiness Command Plans Branch on the G3 Staff of XVIII Airborne Corps. Responsible for implementing the Joint Operations Planning System on the corps staff, he designed, developed, and maintained contingency force package options to support requirements of the Rapid Deployment Force Army (RDF-A). With XVIII Corps designated United States Forces Command Executive Agent for RDJTF Planning and in compliance with joint tasking LTC(P) Gray planned, developed, and published RDF-A contingency force package options for deployment/employment of Army forces from Ranger Company through airborne, air assault, and mechanized infantry division levels. These contingency force package options were briefed and provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in early 1980. Representing Commanding General, United States Army Forces Command, LTC(P) Gray assisted United States European Command in developing Army force packages to support EUCOM OPLAN 4221, and the RDJTF in developing the 1000 series OPLANS.

LIST OF FIGURES

GLOSSARY

ADP	Automatic Data Processing
CAS	Crisis Action System
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
COA	Course of Action
CS	Combat Support
CSS	Combat Service Support
C^3	Command, Control, and Communications
EXPLAN	Exercise Plan
FM	Force Module
FMC	Force Module Concept
FMSS	Force Module Subsystem
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDA	Joint Deployment Agency
JDC	Joint Deployment Community
JDS	Joint Deployment System
JOPS	Joint Operation Planning System
JOPS-FM	Force Module Software in JOPS III
JOPS III	JOPS ADP System
JSCP	Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan
JTF	Joint Task Force
J-3	Operations Directorate, Joint Staff
MRG	Movement Requirement Generator
MSC	Military Sealift Command
MTMC	Military Transportation Management Command
NCA	National Command Authorities
NOPLAN	No formal plan available
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OPORD	Operation Order
RDJTF	Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
SW	Software
TOA	Transportation Operating Agency
TO&E	Table of Organization and Equipment
TPFDD	Time Phased Force and Deployment Data
TUCHA	Type Unit Data File
UIC	Unit Identity Code
ULN	Unit Line Number
USARRED	US Army Forces, Readiness Command
USAREUR	US Army, Europe
USCENTCOM	US Central Command
USCINCCENT	US Commander-in-Chief, Central Command
USCINCEUR	US Commander-in-Chief, Europe
USEUCOM	US European Command
USREDCOM	US Readiness Command
UTC	Unit Type Code

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Force modules and modular operation plans (OPLANS) represent a major step forward for planners and decisionmakers in expediting the planning process during both crisis and deliberate planning situations. However, within the Army there exists several problems which must be overcome to optimize the effectiveness of force modules and problems which cause a general unwillingness at the action officer level to fully accept the Force Module Concept.

BACKGROUND

The Force Module Concept is not new or unique as various forms of force packaging have been used by planners at the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Unified Commands, and Service component planning staffs for many years. The Force Requirements Generator (FRG) developed by the United States Readiness Command (USREDCOM) in the early 1970's, as part of the Joint Operation Planning System (JOPS) software, contained an automated module for building force packages. Its use in the joint deliberate planning process was limited. In 1976 Heavy/Light Corps force packages were analyzed by USREDCOM and identified for planning in the FY 77 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP). In the meantime, the JCS were finding many problems in the joint operation planning process due to the delays encountered. The capability to develop the necessary forces, equipment, resupply, and movement data depended upon the use of existing or modified OPLANs developed for operational situations which normally differed from the real world crisis. There was no automated capability to effectively support a NOPLAN situation, or as the JCS command post exercise WINTEX 79 clearly indicated, to modify an already existing plan

quickly in order to meet a rapidly changing crisis situation. Therefore, in 1979, JCS tasked USREDCOM to provide force packages from sub-battalion to reinforced division size for situations ranging from security/evacuation operations to mid-intensity combat. USREDCOM in turn tasked US Army Forces, Readiness Command (USARRED) to develop the following force packages:

Size	Option
Company	Ranger
Battalion	Ranger, Airborne, Air Assaul Mechanized
Brigade	Armor, Airborne, Air Assault, l ıized
Division	Armor, Airborne, Air Assault, Mechanized
Rapid Deployment Force (RDF)	Combined Package

Not all of these force packages were officially released by the Army to USREDCOM or the JCS. For internal planning purposes only, the Army also developed during this timeframe light, medium, and heavy force packages for an Infantry Rifle Company (IRC), Division Ready Force (DRF-battalion), Division Ready Brigade (DRB), and an Airborne Division.

The force packaging/module concept remained somewhat dormant until the Joint Planning and Execution Steering Committee (JPESC) Final Report forwarded by a Joint Staff Memorandum on 5 February 1982.[1] The committee's report recommended testing and evaluating the Force Module Concept which was approved by JCS, and stemmed from the need to improve the joint planning process and increase flexibility and speed in developing options and implementing OPLANs. In March 1982, Joint Deployment Community representatives met to plan the test and evaluation. Three phases of tests and evaluations were established to first determine if the Force Module Concept was feasible, and secondly determine if force modules could:

a. Improve joint operation planning and the ability of the JCS to monitor and redirect force deployments.

b. Enhance the capability of Unified and Specified Commanders and the JCS to develop and evaluate proposed courses of action (COA) in response to other crises.

All three phases of the test and evaluation were generally acceptable and indicate that the Force Module Concept is feasible. On 3 February 1984, the JCS approved the Force Module Implementation Plan.[2]

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were gathered from various sources on two different fact finding trips. On 4-6 January 1984, the authors first went to Washington, DC, and Fort Monroe, Virginia. Organizations visited in the Pentagon included JCS (J3 and the Defense Communications Agency/Joint Data System Support Center) and Headquarters, Department of the Army (DCSOPS and DCSLOG). Army doctrinal issues were discussed at HQ, TRADOC. The second visit was to Forces Command (FORSCOM - Plans Division) on 23-24 January 1984 and then to Tampa, Florida (USREDCOM, USCENTCOM, and the JDA) from 25-27 January 1984. The majority of the information for this paper came from the research of reports, information papers, messages, studies, and briefings which were available at each organization. In addition, individual interviews and numerous telephone conversations with staff division chiefs/action officers were conducted by the authors.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The original thrust of this study was to be a MACRO assessment of the feasibility of the Force Module Concept from the Army's point of view. However, in the preliminary phases of research it became apparent that even though the JCS approved the Force Module Implementation Plan on 3 February 1984, there

remains a multitude of both major and minor Army problems which must be addressed to effect a smooth implementation. Thus, due to the limited time and travel resources available, this study is limited in scope, and only attempts a MICRO evaluation of a few selected problems. Any attempt, for instance, to assess the major problem area of generating accurate sustainment requirements and capabilities for force modules goes beyond the capability of this study.

Information, conclusions, and recommendations are the opinions of not only the authors, but also of staff officers and middle managers of HQDA, major commands, TRADOC, JDA, and Unified Commands. As such, the majority of this study is not quantifiable, but provides a variety of views. The purpose of this study is not to single out organizations for criticism, but rather to focus on methods of expediting the planning process through Force Module Concept improvements.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

1. Joint Chiefs of Staff: Joint Planning and Execution Steering Committee (JPESC) Final Report, January 1982. Joint Staff Memorandum 196-82, 5 February 1982.

2. Force Module Implementation Plan, JCS SM-85-84, 7 February 1984.

CHAPTER II

FORCE MODULE CONCEPT ANALYSIS

FORCE MODULE CONCEPT DEFINITION

A force module is a list of forces and other elements (equipment, replacements, etc.) describing a combination of combat, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS) units and their sustainment. The force is intended to be self-sustaining for a specific period of time, which is currently established at thirty days. While a force module is usually composed of a single service, it may be joint as in the case of a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF). In addition, a force module can be employed as a single entity or in combination with other modules to form new modules of differing size, complexity, and capability. They may be either mission or task oriented in their employment.

Force modules are composed of two types--"Service" and "OPLAN Dependent." The first type of module consists of notional forces developed by each of the Services in accordance with Service doctrine. Each module usually contains thirty days of sustainment based on consumption factors developed by the Service. The primary purpose of these modules is to use them in situations where there is no approved operation plan available "on-the-shelf" (NOPLAN situation). In this instance, the Unified and Specified Commands, their Service components, and the Transportation Operating Agencies use the Service modules to rapidly develop Courses of Action (COA), analyze the forces, and determine gross lift requirements. Additionally, Service modules may be used as the first step in the deliberate planning process to develop Operation Plan (OPLAN) dependent modules for the Time Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD).

The second type of modules, OPLAN Dependent Modules, are used in the deliberate planning process. The Service modules are modified, tailored, refined, and sourced

to adapt them to not only the mission, enemy, terrain, and time (METT), but also in terms of role, destination, weather, and expected intensity of combat. Replacing the notional or type units used in a Service module by actual, available units is called sourcing. Since all of the CS, CSS, and sustainment elements associated with combat elements are contained in an OPLAN Dependent Module, planners/operators have more flexibility during execution to modify a force deployment.

One can readily see that these two types of modules provide the Commanders-in-Chief (CINCs) with a ready made force list for rapid creation of COA's in a crisis situation. Force planners must frequently build plans under extreme time-sensitive constraints during a crisis. Without force modules, there is not always sufficient time to add all of the required details, especially in the CS, CSS, and sustainment areas to provide an accurate deployment estimate. Force modules, therefore, provide the decisionmakers with a timely, accurate assessment of the resources required to implement each COA.

EVALUATION TEST OF ARMY SERVICE MODULES

At the Phase III force module test and evaluation the Army in response to joint taskings had provided essentially four types of Service modules. These modules were evaluated as part of the joint test and evaluation of the Force Module Concept. They contained organic combat support, combat service support, appropriate allocations of the corps slice, and requisite sustainment for a thirty-day period. The Service modules currently provided by the Army are as follows:

Division Level

Light Infantry

Airborne

Air Assault

Mechanized

Brigade Level

Light Infantry

Airborne

Air Assault

Mechanized

Armored

Armored Cavalry Regiment

Battalion Level

Ranger

Special Operating Forces

DOCTRINAL LIMITATIONS OF SERVICE MODULES

Army planners maintain that Army doctrine and force structuring methodology prevents the Army from fully implementing the Service Force Module Concept. Central to the Force Module Concept is the aggregation of forces by utilizing a building block principle where multiple modules of a given type will equal the next higher tactical echelon (e.g., three brigade modules is not necessarily equal to a division). The shortcoming is readily apparent in the case of adding three separate brigade modules together, where the total force would be appreciably greater than the single division module.

On the point of force structuring methodology, the Army design of CS/CSS units is intended to assign those support units multiple missions in support of disparate customers in order to save manpower and material. This force structure design imperative is at cross purposes with the rationale for the Force Module Concept. Self-sustaining, independently deployable force modules are not compatible with multitasked CS/CSS units. That is to say, CS/CSS units are not divisible by infinity.

In certain cases the building block concept may prove to be adequate where those separately deployable CS/CSS forces are incrementally employed in the same operational area within doctrinal parameters for mission taskings. However, this concept will not work where multitasked, separately deployable CS/CSS modules are to be employed in different operational areas. CS/CSS units organic to a combat formation must be employed in the same theater or operational area.

Another doctrinal point made by Army Staff planners is that the Army does not single out the battalion as a separate fighting entity. The battalion fights as part of a brigade or a division formation. Thus, it is held that Army doctrine precludes Service modules of combat battalion, or company size. Ranger and special operations forces are excepted from this doctrinal limitation.

From the ground commanders perspective, there is also concern that the Force Module Concept may necessarily require the tailoring of forces prior to adequate considerations of the mission, enemy, terrain, and troops (METT) available. This places critical constraints on the ground force commander and may limit his tactical plan even before he is tasked to perform a given mission.

JOINT REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICE MODULES

While all of the Service modules were designed properly and are doctrinally correct, both USREDCOM and USCENTCOM maintain that they are not sufficient in number or variety to adequately support the full range of crisis scenarios without extensive and time consuming tailoring.[1] Thus, if extensive tailoring is required with large aggregated Service modules, one of the reasons for the Force Module Concept is forfeited. Those joint headquarters further recommend that forces should be modularized down to the lowest level possible to enable CINCs/Service components to use them in limited operations.[2] While these requirements may cause more work in initially designing Service modules, the overall value in utility of the modules in joint planning will be well worth the initial effort.

Additional consideration should be given to developing Service modules (containing only organic forces), and separate CS/CSS modules to provide building blocks for tailoring to specific corps or theater level scenarios. These separate CS/CSS modules are needed to support the more likely combinations of divisions and brigades that would be used in various scenarios, i.e., CS/CSS modules to support a corps of two light infantry divisions; CS/CSS modules to support a corps consisting of one light infantry and one mechanized division, etc. Variated Service module options such as these will allow the rapid development of Courses of Action (COA) and enhance the CINC's ability to rapidly identify the source module from which to create a tailored force for a specific mission.

CONSTRAINTS ON SERVICE MODULE SOURCING

One of the inherent problems in building more Service module options is the greater chance that combat, CS/CSS forces will be tasked in multiple Service modules. This points up the fact that sourcing of the Service modules is made more difficult as the number of modules expand beyond the available inventory of unit flags. Nor does the Force Module Concept itself facilitate or reduce the time required to source forces identified during the planning sequence.

One possible solution to the delays encountered in force planning during a crisis situation is to have approved sourced force modules for one of a kind units available for planning. While Service modules (notional) provide a rapid means of building a force list during NOPLAN crisis action, sourced force modules will expedite the planning process more and provide an improved crisis action response capability. These force modules could be maintained on-line through the JDA plans maintenance concept with supporting commanders updating unit flags as appropriate to insure timely force response. In this context one of a kind type units would always be identified with specific sourced force modules.

A METHODOLOGY FOR TAILORED SOURCED FORCE MODULES

Key to the generation of forces in response to the Joint Operations Planning and Execution System (JOPES) is the concomitant generation of strategic airlift forces to close the force within the timeframe specified by the Unified Commander. Among the many constraints on the Unified Commands and their Service components (in a NOPLAN situation) is the timely quantification of gross lift requirements for both air and surface transportation assets. To facilitate this process, the JOPES should provide to the Unified Commander and his Service component three distinct (heavy, medium, light) force module planning and employment options from corps to battalion.

This not only satisfies the recognized joint requirements for more Army force modules by making battalion modules available, it also expands by an order of three the options available within each type (armored, light infantry, airborne, air assault, mechanized, ranger, special forces) force module from battalion to corps level (see Figure 1). Thus by adding two Service modules at the corps level and five Service modules at the battalion level, the total Army Service modules increase from twelve to nineteen. Additionally, use of the light, medium, heavy force design technique increases the effective force module deployment/employment options from twelve to fifty seven.

The methodology of expanding the number of Army force modules by the light, medium, heavy force option technique will also facilitate sourcing each force module, especially where airborne, air assault, mechanized infantry, special forces, and rangers are required. The preponderance of Army force modules will most likely be sourced from those strategic Army forces assigned to XVIII Airborne Corps that are already available and have the mission to provide on call forces from battalion to brigade level. The graph at Figure 2 illustrates the complete range of (light, medium, heavy) force module options that may be tailored for deployment/ employment against a postulated threat force of various size and capabilities.

FIGURE 1

EXPANDED ARMY SERVICE MODULES

- Four Levels--Contains Combat, CS, CSS, EAC Corps Slice and Sustainment

  - Corps
    --Airborne
    --Light Inf

  - Division
    --Light Inf
    --Airborne
    --Air Assault
    --Mechanized

  - Brigade
    --Light Inf (sep)
    --Airborne
    --Air Assault
    --Mechanized
    --Armored
    --Armored Cavalry

  - Battalion
    --Airborne
    --Air Assault
    --Mechanized
    --Armored
    --Ranger
    --Special Forces
    --Light Infantry

Notes:

1. Modules expanded from 12 to 19 by addition of corps and battalion level modules.

2. Effective modules were expanded from 12 to 57 via the light, medium, heavy options for each type force at every Service module level.

FIGURE 2

FORCE MODULE OPTIONS AND THREAT CORRELATION

SERVICE MODULES / OPTIONS		LEVELS											
		BN			BDE			DIV			CORPS		
		L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
TYPE FORCES	AIRBORNE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	LIGHT INFANTRY	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	MECHANIZED	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	AIR ASSAULT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	ARMOR	X	X	X	X	X	X						
	ARMORED CAVALRY				X	X	X						
	SPECIAL FORCES	X	X	X									
	RANGER	X	X	X									

POSTULATED THREAT FORCE →

Notes:

1. Option Codes: L = Light, M = Medium, H = Heavy.
2. Reader must keep in mind that for each module selected (e.g., mechanized brigade) there are three options (i.e., light medium, heavy) available.

To facilitate understanding of the inherent capabilities and limitations of each Service module, the Service module format header should contain a descriptor of the combat power associated with the particular module and specific option, its command and control capabilities, and CS/CSS sustainment capabilities. Ground rules for type mission assignment and criteria for tailoring the force should also be included as header information.

PERCEPTIONS OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS

During the Phase II test evaluation a major problem was encountered when three CINCs developed independent Courses of Action (COA) in isolation without knowing actual force availability. This has indicated to the Service components and supporting CINCs that the Service module concept may promote "close hold planning," on the part of the supported CINC now that he has been provided as part of the automated planning system, information which would otherwise be provided by the Service component. This additional capacity for "close hold planning" is not an intended outcome, but merely a by-product of the improvement in the time required to coordinate forces through use of Service modules.

The system also provides a corrective to this perceived problem, because the Service modules also serve as an excellent shorthand notation which may be used to readily communicate large force lists between supported and supporting commands. This would permit Service components to begin initial sourcing activities as soon as a particular module or option has been identified. The scenario tailoring could then be interactive between the CINC and the supporting Service component. This perception may also be eliminated by involving the Service component in the planning cycle (COA development) prior to submission of COA to the JCS for approval.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis on the Force Module Concept demonstrates that force modules may expedite and, in some respects, simplify the planning process, but they do not eliminate the need for trained, qualified planners. Although the Service modules will contain linkage between combat, CS, and CSS forces, planners must still be familiar with the doctrine and rationale behind such linkages. The planner who uses force modules should be capable of building them or be familiar with the doctrinal rationale. This is desirable because the planner will be required to evaluate the Service module for its suitability to a given situation and to tailor the module as necessary.

- There are not enough force module options in the Army to accommodate rapid contingency planning in a NOPLAN situation. To provide more options for various contingency requirements, the Army must build both larger modules at the corps level and smaller modules at the battalion level.

- Force modules are for planning purposes only.

- Service component commanders must be involved at the beginning of all planning.

- Service modules will require tailoring by the CINCs (both supported and supporting) through the Service component commanders to meet a specified scenario.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

1. OPLAN and Force Module Concept Test Phase II Test Evaluation, 2-13 May 1983, p. 66.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop, implement, and provide to the Joint Planning Systems additional Army Service modules that include force modules at both corps and battalion level.

Develop and implement the light, medium, and heavy Service module options at every force level from battalion to corps.

Supporting CINC/Service command provide comment/concurrence on selected Service module during COA development.

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